

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF IRELAND



THE  
THEOLOGICAL HALL  
CENTENARY



1854 — 1954

## *foreword*

**T**HERE are milestones which we scarcely notice as we travel along the pathway of life, but there are also milestones which we cannot and should not pass without notice and without pausing to consider the way by which we have come.

In the history of the Theological Hall we have come to a very important milestone, one which reminds us that it is a hundred years since the Hall was established. We believe it is right and fitting that at this stage we should consider all the way the Lord our God hath led us.

To mark in a permanent way the centenary year of the establishment of the Theological Hall the Committee of Superintendence has published this little booklet, which contains an address by the Convener given at the Portrush Conference on 4th August; an Historical Sketch by Rev. A. Loughridge, B.A., and the Opening Lecture of the Session 1954-5 by Professor T. B. McFarlane, B.A., both given at a public meeting in the Lecture Hall of Grosvenor Road R.P. Church on 21st October.

The Committee publishes this memorial in thankful acknowledgment of the goodness of God in the past. To Him we must give all the praise for a hundred years' service rendered by a succession of scholarly and devoted Professors and Lecturers down to the present hour.

The booklet is sent out with the prayer that it will bring blessing wherever it is read; that it will be the means of creating a deeper interest throughout the Church in the work of the Theological Hall; and that this deeper interest will manifest itself in the days to come in the form of an increasing number of young men being led to offer themselves for the work of the Gospel ministry.

J. W. CALDERWOOD,  
*Convener.*



## COMMITTEE OF SUPERINTENDENCE AND STUDENTS, 1954



SEATED (left to right): PROF. T. B. McFARLANE, REVS. A. GILMOUR, J. W. CALDERWOOD  
JAMES CAMPBELL, PROF. McILMOYLE.

STANDING: REVS. HUGH J. BLAIR, W. H. POLLOCK, MESSRS. WILLARD KELLY, SAMUEL REID  
ROBERT HANNA, REVS. WM. McCULLOUGH, A. R. WRIGHT and A. LOUGHRIDGE.

## *Address by Rev. J. W. Calderwood*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

I WOULD like, first of all, to thank the Executive Committee of the C.Y.P.U. for so graciously assigning a period of time at this Conference to the Committee of Superintendence of the Theological Hall.

We regard it as a great privilege to be allowed to say something about the claims of the Hall to this audience of young people, drawn, as it is, from the four Presbyteries of our Church, and we thank the officials of the C.Y.P.U. for this privilege.

As most of you are already aware, this is the centenary year of the establishment of the Theological Hall. On 22nd August, 1854, the first opening meeting was held and the first lecture delivered.

The men of those days were men of vision, they were men of faith, they were men of courage, they were men who served their own generation well and who also served well generations then unborn. We to-day are still reaping the fruits of their labours, for the men who break to our people the bread of life are men who were trained in the Theological Hall. "Other men laboured and we have entered into their labours."

Our fathers saw the need, the imperative need for an educated ministry; they saw that the Church must stand upon the vantage ground of truth if she is to triumph in the conflict with the rulers of spiritual wickedness in high places, and so they established an Institution where young men, under the guidance of scholarly and godly teachers, might become rooted and grounded in the faith and equipped with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. As a writer in "The Northern Whig" said recently, "What a debt of gratitude the country owes to those who, in its divinity halls, expound sacred learning, and kindle in young minds and hearts a holy zeal for truth and righteousness and the great concerns of the Kingdom of God." We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who conceived the idea of a Theological Hall for our Church and who made the idea a reality. And we owe a debt of gratitude to all those devoted, scholarly and self-sacrificing men who in the past, and in the present, gave and are giving of their best to fit young men for the high calling of the Gospel ministry.

The Hall Committee cherishes the hope that in this centenary year a new interest will be aroused throughout the entire Church in the Theological Hall, and that expression will be given to that



new interest in the form of more generous support of the work connected with it. The Hall is the very heart and centre of the Church. If the heart is weak the entire body will be weak. We are taught to pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust forth labourers into His harvest. By supporting the work of the Hall you will be making a valuable contribution towards the realisation and fulfilment of that prayer. We should rejoice and give thanks to God that for a hundred years evangelical preachers have gone forth from the Hall to minister to the congregations of our Church, to guide, enlighten and encourage our members in life, and to comfort them in the hour and article of death. On the occasion of a centenary it is natural that we should look back over the past, and, as we do so, we cannot but be impressed by the great contrast between man's way of life a hundred years ago and his way of life to-day. Scientific discoveries have in many ways revolutionised our mode of living. When the Hall was founded the fastest means of transport for most people was the horse, if they were rich enough to own a horse.

In those days there were no motor cars, no telephones, no electric light, no radio or television sets, no electrical appliances in the home, no mechanised equipment on the farm, no buses, no cinemas, no aeroplanes, and comparatively few books and newspapers. Never perhaps in the history of the human race was there a century which witnessed so startling scientific discoveries as the past century. Many of those discoveries have caused a remarkable forward movement in the progress of mankind. Life has been enriched in countless ways through the inventions of scientists. God may use some of these inventions for the bringing in of His own Kingdom. Through the radio to-day the Word of God can be preached, not to an audience of hundreds, or of thousands, it can be preached to an audience of millions. The Word that liveth and abideth for ever can be sent out over seas and oceans and continents to bring light and joy and peace into homes and hearts thousands of miles distant from the preacher. That is something for which we have reason to be grateful to the scientists.

We cannot, however, think of the progress that has been made during the past century without looking at the sinister side of the picture. In no department has there been greater discoveries than in that of destructive weapons. With startling suddenness the atomic age was ushered in, when in 1945 two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, reducing those cities to heaps of rubble and killing and wounding at least two hundred thousand people. Already the atomic bomb has been superseded by the hydrogen bomb. No wonder Mr. Churchill said recently, "Humanity stands to-day at its most fateful milestone. On the one hand science displays a vision of plenty and comfort of which the masses have never dreamed.

On the other hand she opens a yawning chasm of self-destruction." As we think of these frightful weapons of destruction which science has created we cannot but feel how far all this is removed from the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, Who came not to destroy life, but to save life. Well might Dr. George MacLeod, in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, say to a crowded, hushed, and solemn house when speaking against the use of atomic and hydrogen bombs: "I for one cannot press that button; in the name of God, can you?" The century that is past has witnessed tremendous changes, some for the betterment of mankind, some which may engulf mankind in destruction. It has been well said, "There are some things which change, and they are very wonderful, and there are some things which do not change, and they are more wonderful still."

In presenting the claims of the Theological Hall I want to mention briefly three things which do not change.

(1) First of all there is man's need. Notwithstanding the great achievements of the past century, human need is as great to-day, and it is fundamentally the same to-day as it was a hundred years ago. As one preacher said recently, "The problem of the world to-day is not the problem of the hydrogen bomb; the problem of the world to-day is in the fact that men are infected with a disease, a moral disease called sin." That is the great problem of this age; it is the great problem of every age. Science is utterly impotent in the presence of this problem. Notwithstanding the benefits conferred on mankind by the discoveries of science, the heart of man is restless still. Doctors and psychiatrists will tell you that in recent years there has been a great increase in mental and nervous ailments. There are many to-day who can neither work nor sleep without tablets of a narcotic nature. This shows that the comforts and amenities of this age cannot alleviate the troubles and ills of the mind and of the heart. Fundamentally man's need is the same to-day as it has been all down the ages.

(2) A second thing which does not change is God's provision for man's need. If the great problem of the world is sin, the only solution to that problem is in the grace and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because our fathers realised this great truth they established the Theological Hall, so that men might be fitted and equipped for the great work of proclaiming the Gospel of the grace of God. Paul says to the Corinthians, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Christ and Him crucified was the theme of Paul's preaching wherever he went. He knew that this Gospel and this Gospel alone could bring peace to men and to nations.

This was the Gospel for Rome, for Corinth, for Ephesus, for Philippi, for Colossae, for Thessalonica; this was the Gospel for high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, and this was the Gospel that Paul preached to beggars, to kings and to governors. The men who passed through the Theological Hall down the years were trained to preach this same Gospel. Not one of them could preach like Paul, but not one of them had a poorer Gospel to preach than Paul. They were all sent forth to tell men and women of God's provision for man's need, of God's remedy for sin in and through Jesus Christ. Men in this centenary year of the Theological Hall are being trained to proclaim the same message. The theme of their preaching will be "Christ and Him Crucified." God's provision for man's need does not change.

(3) A third thing which does not change is God's plan to use human instrumentality in the making known of His Gospel. From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation God used man to spread abroad His message. Before the world was destroyed by a flood Noah was sent to warn men and women of the coming judgment and to tell them of the Ark of salvation. When the first-born of the Egyptians were doomed to death, Moses was sent to Goshen to tell the people there how they could be saved from the avenging angel by sprinkling the blood of a slain lamb on the lintel and two side posts of the doors of their houses. Before God led His people into captivity He sent His prophets unto them to call them to repentance, and so on through the Bible we read of God calling one and another and sending one and another to proclaim His Word and His Gospel, and the cry of the New Testament is, "How then shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher." God's plan to use man for the spread of the Gospel is a plan that will stand until time shall be no more. There never was greater need than there is to-day for preachers of the Gospel of redeeming love. There are antipathies and enmities, alienations and estrangements in national, social and family life that nothing can heal save the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And there is need to-day for preachers of an evangelical Gospel, because many have gone forth with a gospel which is not the Gospel of Christ. The gospel of the modernist is a travesty of the Gospel of the Bible, and as such, there is in it no real word of hope or of comfort for the individual or for the world. And there is great need to-day for men to proclaim those distinctive truths for which the Covenanting Church stands and for which our fathers suffered and died in the past. Those truths are still despised by many, but they shall yet become glorious on the earth. Some who call themselves fundamentalists, and who proclaim from the housetop how they are defending the truth, think nothing of casting aside a whole book of Holy Scripture, namely, the book of Psalms. The testimony of the Reformed



Presbyterian Church is a testimony that needs to be emphasised to-day. We need preachers who will not compromise in the matter of our Church's distinctive testimony. Nothing can be gained by compromise, but a great deal could be lost. And so we come back to the question which has been asked already at this Conference—Who will go? Who will go to preach this glorious Gospel of the Sovereignty of Christ in the Church, in the nation and in the individual life? The Theological Hall wants men, the Church wants men, God wants men with love for Christ and a zeal for righteousness and truth burning in their hearts. When doctors were probing the wounds of one of Napoleon's soldiers, the wounded man said, "Cut deeper, gentlemen, and you will find the Emperor." The Captain of Salvation calls men to serve and follow Him, and those who serve Him best feel His presence and power in their hearts. When they do feel that presence and power they are ready to serve in whatever field He chooses for them.

This year is the centenary of the Battle of Balaclava. Tennyson has given deathless fame to the brave soldiers who obeyed their commander's order, although they knew that obedience meant certain death.

"Forward, the light brigade!  
Was there a man dismayed?  
Not though the soldier knew  
Someone had blundered:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred."

The Captain Who makes no mistakes calls young men to-day to serve Him in the high places of the field. He still asks the question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? He still confronts us with the challenge, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" What is your answer to be? Are there young men in this audience, are there young men in the Church, who will answer the call? Remember the inspired words of Isaiah, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth." "Who then among you this day is willing to consecrate himself unto the Lord?"

# *Brief Historical Sketch, 1854-1954*

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## I. PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY

**T**HE Reformed Presbyterian Church has always required that her ministers should undergo a prolonged period of training prior to ordination. It is a Scriptural Principle. In the days of Samuel we read of the establishment of schools where young men were taught and trained to give instruction to others in the things of God. The Jewish Synagogue was a seat of learning for the Jews. It is a Divine requirement that the priests' lips should keep knowledge (Malachi 2:7). In Apostolic days Paul urges young Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "And the things that thou hast heard of me . . . the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

The Reformers laid emphasis on the value of education and were university men of outstanding scholarship. Calvin's work illustrates this point, and one has only to remember his work at Geneva in the interests of education to realise that the work of the Reformation led to higher standards of education in preparation for the Christian ministry. In Scotland, John Knox, in his work of Reformation, gave attention to the course of studies in the Universities of Glasgow, St. Andrews, and Aberdeen. His first Book of Discipline, published in 1560, has much to say about the education of ministers. He pleads, "That none be admitted to the class and seige of Divines, but he that shall have sufficient testimonials of his time well spent in Dialectics, Mathematics, Physics, Ethics, Economics, and Politics, and of his docility in the Moral Philosophy, and the Hebrew Tongue."

Nor did scholarship flag in the trying days of the Second Reformation in Scotland. A glance at the lives of Rutherford and Cargill, Guthrie and Renwick, will convince any reader that they were men of learning, who brought to the service of Christ and of Scotland's oppressed Kirk talents that were enhanced and enriched by the schools of men as well as by the wisdom that is from above.

While scholarship and academic qualifications are no substitute for spiritual insight and the grace and power of the Holy Spirit in the preparation for the work of the ministry in every age, the Covenanting Church continues to lay emphasis on the dangers of ignorance and the need for an educated ministry.

## II. STEPS LEADING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL HALL

The closest ties have always linked the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland with the mother Church in Scotland. This has been notable in the training of candidates for the ministry. There is no record to show how William Martin and Matthew Linn and William James prosecuted their studies in the middle of the 18th century. It is known, however, that William Staveland, after attending a classical school at Antrim, studied at Glasgow University before 1770. Here he had the opportunity of taking classes in Greek and Hebrew, Philosophy and Ethics, Logic and Mathematics. Certificates in these subjects, and approval by the Presbytery, were sufficient to secure for a candidate trials for licence. The Church in Scotland in 1785 appointed Rev. John Thorburn of Pentland as Theological Tutor. He died, however, without entering on the duties of his office. In 1802, Rev. John MacMillan of Stirling was elected Professor of Divinity. For sixteen years he was the instrument in training many able and useful ministers for the Irish and Scottish Churches. A number of these, including Rev. Thomas Cathcart, who was ordained in Creevagh in 1803, were graduates of Glasgow University.

In 1810 the Belfast Academical Institution was founded. This proved a great asset as well as a great convenience to students. The Institution provided largely what our students required by way of academic equipment. It was a school and a college in which Divinity classes were established in 1815. Our students, after attending the full Arts curriculum at the Institution, spent two, and more usually three, sessions at the Theological Hall in Scotland. When John MacMillan died, Andrew Symington of Paisley was appointed Professor of Divinity in 1820. For thirty-three years this gifted and saintly scholar made his influence felt throughout the whole Church by his devoted work in training young men for the Gospel ministry.

At this time there was no fixed term for Irish students attending the Divinity Hall. While the Scottish students were required to attend four sessions, the Irish students were licensed after three, and, in certain circumstances, after two sessions. This led to a difficulty when the late Prof. James Dick was called to Stirling in 1823. An appeal was made to Synod by Presbytery on the ground of injustice to Scottish students and Mr. Dick was declared ineligible to receive a call in Scotland. In 1826 delegates from the Irish Synod conferred with their Scottish brethren and a plan of study for students in both countries was formulated. This was never enthusiastically taken up by the Irish Synod, and while students continued to attend Dr. Symington's classes,



the Committee on the Plan of Education, at the Synod of 1830, appealed for the appointment of a Professor of Divinity for the home Church.

For some years after 1830, Synod had a controversy with the Belfast Academical Institution on the unsatisfactory nature of the instruction given in Moral Philosophy. An attempt was made in the Synod of 1832 to prohibit our students from studying Philosophy, but the situation was eased somewhat when Dr. Henry Cooke, then minister of May Street Presbyterian Church, held classes in the subject and Presbyteries did not forbid this instruction. In 1837 the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod requested the Covenanting Synod to join with them in an approach to the Royal Belfast Academical Institution with the view of obtaining the appointment of an adequate Professor of Moral Philosophy.

Other Presbyterian bodies were now giving consideration to the question of providing their own training colleges. In 1838 the Non-Subscribing Association appointed two Professors of Divinity. In 1841 the newly-formed General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland began to discuss the matter of a new college. Theological Chairs were established in 1847 and the new college building was formally opened in 1853. The Reformed Presbyterian Synod was moving definitely towards that goal. In 1849, Synod appointed a Committee to consider the National System of Education in Ireland. This was consequent on the establishment of the three Queen's Colleges at Belfast, Cork, and Galway. The Committee presented several reports, the most notable being to the Synod of 1853. The report asked Synod to encourage the study of the Irish language. It recommended that theological students should be required to attend a fourth session at Paisley, or that a Missionary Training Institute be established forthwith in this country at which they may be required to attend for a time. The Committee also strongly recommended that students under the care of Synod should secure a degree in an Irish or Scottish university, that they should be proficient in Hebrew and cognate languages, and that they should have properly supervised intersessional studies and a library. In the next year events moved rapidly. Dr. Andrew Symington died on September 22, 1853.

On Wednesday, July 12, 1854, Synod in session heard a memorial from the Belfast congregation, praying that 'a Professor of Divinity be appointed for the students of theology in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.' This was supported by a petition from the theological students, requesting Synod to appoint a Theological Professor to instruct them in Divinity. In connection with these memorials, Rev. James Dick read the report by the Committee on Education:

1. "That Synod forthwith appoint two Professors of Theology, the one for Systematic and the other for Exegetical and Pastoral Theology, who will also conjointly train students for the missionary work.

2. "That a Committee, consisting of a minister from each Presbytery, be appointed to superintend the Seminary and the students generally.

3. "That Synod use its best endeavours to enlarge, by collections and donations, the Synodical Fund.

4. "That a letter be sent to the Scottish Reformed Synod, expressive of our deep sense of obligation to them for the manifold benefits conferred upon our students who have attended their Theological Hall."

### III. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL HALL

The report was adopted heartily and it was agreed that, since the matter was one of great importance, a member of the court should lead the Synod in prayer. Rev. Wm. Russell did so at the Moderator's request, and the appointment of the Professors was deferred till next morning. On Thursday, 13th July, Rev. James Dick, Kellswater, was appointed Professor of Systematic Theology, and Rev. Thomas Houston, D.D., Knockbracken, was appointed Professor of Exegetical and Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History.

Synod appointed a Committee of Superintendence consisting of Rev. Samuel Simms, Loughbrickland; Rev. Wm. McCarroll, Belfast; Rev. Robert Nevin, Londonderry; and Rev. James Smyth, Drimbolg; Mr. McCarroll to act as Convener. The Committee was instructed to meet and submit interim arrangements before the final adjournment of Synod.

The following arrangements were submitted by the Committee and approved by Synod: 'That the Hall meet in Belfast and the use of the school-room in College Street South Church be requested for the purpose; that the Hall open on Tuesday, 22nd August, to be continued for two months; that the Scottish Church be thanked for past services to our students; and that members of the Church be circularised to claim support for the Hall. It was further agreed that the Professors should submit to the Committee details regarding the course of study and the hours of classes, and that the standing of students on entering the Hall be further considered.'

On the 22nd August, at 11.0 o'clock, the Professors met with the students to make arrangements for the business of the session. At 7.0 o'clock in the evening a public meeting was held in College Street South Church. Rev. Samuel Simms, Moderator of Synod, presided, and introduced Professor Dick, who delivered the opening lecture on "The Importance and Responsibilities of Theological Studies and the Encouragement to Prosecute Them."

Six students attended the first session of the new Theological Hall. Their names are worthy of a place in this sketch. Some of them will stir a chord in our hearts; some will perhaps revive a memory; some have worthy descendents in this audience. They were: Robert Allen, James Anderson, Thomas Conn Britton, Thomas Dick, William Hanna, and Joseph Archibald Moody.

Robert Allen served the Church in the Irish Mission for twelve years and in Newtownards for forty years. James Anderson leaves no record of his life and work and seems to have dropped out after three sessions at the Hall. Thomas C. Britton, a son of the manse, had a brief ministry of four years in Newry, when a serious illness brought about an early and tragic death. Thomas Dick was ordained in Killinchy in 1860, installed in Bailiesmills in 1863, where he laboured with acceptance till his early and lamented death in 1882. William Hanna died in early years after pastorates of two years each in Manchester and Newtownards. Joseph A. Moody, after a short pastorate in Convoy, was minister of Cullybackey congregation in the Eastern R.P. Synod for nearly thirty years.

The first session ended on Wednesday, 18th October, 1854. The public lecture was delivered by Dr. Houston on "The Qualifications Necessary for the Christian Ministry." The work of the session was reviewed with enthusiasm. The Professors were delighted with the work of the students. The students held a meeting and issued a statement, signed by Joseph A. Moody as Secretary, expressing their profound respect for the Professors and their wholehearted appreciation of the work done during the session. The venture of faith in establishing the Hall had surpassed expectations and augured well for the years to come.

#### IV. CHANGES DURING THE YEARS

The Synod of 1855 devoted a whole sederunt to the business of the Theological Hall, and it is evident that Synod was well pleased with the successful inauguration of this enterprise. Synod adopted a number of regulations:

1. That students entering the Hall should present certificates from their respective Presbyteries.



2. That they should commence attendance at the Hall after the second session at College.

3. That students be required to attend four sessions of the Hall.

The passing of the years brought changes in arrangements for the work of the Hall. After a few years the abandoned study of Philosophy was again revived, and the two Professors were asked to share the course of instruction.

A plan of Education for Candidates for the Ministry sanctioned by Synod in 1859, required that "henceforward a literary degree, either of A.B. or A.M., shall be regarded as necessary to be possessed by the student either before entering upon the study of Theology, or prior to the completion of the theological course." This law was not enforced till 1865. The subject of Elocution received special attention in 1866. There were to be two classes per week and at the close of each session prizes were offered for competition at "a Public Exhibition in presence of the Professors and, if possible, the Committee of Superintendence; . . . the reading of a portion of Holy Scripture, with one of the Psalms in metre and a portion of some suitable religious discourse, be always included in the programme for such exhibition." In these early days Synod gave all students a thorough examination before directing Presbyteries to grant them licence to preach the Gospel. Sometimes a whole sederunt was spent in the examination of one student.

The plan of Education was further revised and approved by Synod in 1869. This was by far the most detailed scheme yet considered by the Church. In all it contained nineteen points, covering a young man's preparation from school days to licensure. The preparatory course for Matriculation suggested New Testament Greek, Chronology, Ancient and Modern History, Antiquities, and Ancient Geography. In addition, students were required to have a knowledge of the Scriptures and of our Subordinate Standards. The College Course in Arts seems stiff and forbidding. After recommending the study of Literature, Ancient and Modern Languages, Mathematics, Science, Philosophy and History, there is added as a sort of afterthought, "It is desirable that attention should be paid to Political Economy and Jurisprudence."

Two points deal with the entrance to the study of Theology directing the Presbyteries to prescribe a Homily to be delivered soon after the opening of the session of the Hall and recommending students to become acquainted with the elements of Hebrew Grammar and to study the Irish Language and Literature. There follows then the prescribed course of study at the Theological Hall, and a notable change is made in the abandoning of the four sessions of two summer months in favour of three sessions of four months each, beginning in November.

In adopting this plan of Education unanimously, Synod makes it clear that they have set a very high standard for students for the ministry. The plan was adhered to for twenty-seven years and proved successful in its working.

In the 1890s, however, there was a marked fall in the number of students offering themselves for the work of the ministry. In the years 1894 and 1895 no students were enrolled. Synod, in 1895, gave 'a lengthened and painstaking consideration of a series of proposals' for the modification of the work of the Hall. The proposals were debated and altered by Synod during the next five years. The proposals finally adopted in 1901 provided for the appointment of three Professors instead of two as heretofore, the requirement from students of a university degree or its equivalent, and the direction that students devote three hours per week to Mission work in the city of Belfast under the direction of the Committee of Superintendence and the Eastern Presbytery, the scheme to be called "The Students' Home Mission."

In changes during the years we note two other points. The adoption of the revised Code in 1931 made little change in the course of study, apart from lengthening each session from four to six months. In 1945 the teaching staff was increased from three to four, the Chair in Hebrew and Greek being divided into two lectureships. This arrangement has raised the standard in these subjects and students are now well equipped to take Hebrew as a subject in the Degree Examination in Trinity College, Dublin.

## V. THE LECTURE ROOM AND LIBRARY

During its hundred years' history the Theological Hall has been mainly identified with one congregation, College Street South, later known as Grosvenor Road Church. The congregation's school-room was the Hall's first meeting-place. In the early years the congregation was accustomed to entertain the students in an annual soirée to mark the close of each session, and it is reported of one festive occasion that 'tea was supplied in the usual excellent style.' The Hall was so much at home in College Street South Church that in 1870 Synod agreed to raise the sum of £300 to assist the congregation to renovate their church premises, on the grounds that a room would be provided for the Theological Hall and for the Hall Library. Later this accommodation was reported to be exceedingly good, and it was enjoyed by Professors and students for thirty years.

In 1900 Synod was asked to provide alternative temporary accommodation for the Hall during the rebuilding of College Street South Church. This accommodation was secured for two

years in the Lecture Hall of Dublin Road Church. When Grosvenor Road Church buildings had been opened for worship a crisis developed between the Trustees of the congregation and the Committee of Superintendence of the Theological Hall. The Committee seemed to think that the 1870 contribution towards the renovation of the old property gave the Theological Hall the right to a meeting-place within the new building. The Trustees of the congregation disputed this claim and requested a new arrangement with the Committee. A special meeting of Synod on November 18, 1902, considered the relationship between the Trustees and the Theological Hall. Provision was made for the Hall to be accommodated at Dublin Road for one year and steps were taken towards establishing a suitable agreement with the Trustees of Grosvenor Road Church property. In 1903 there were still some details outstanding, so the Committee were given directions by Synod "to rent suitable premises for the accommodation of the Hall and Hall Library . . . and failing the securing of such premises to try and find a suitable site for the erection of such buildings as may be necessary."

The Committee secured a top-floor room in the Scottish Provident Institution Buildings at the modest rent of £2. 15s. a quarter. Here, for three years, the Theological Hall met. It proved very unsatisfactory accommodation. The room was cold; it was inaccessible at times when the lift refused to function, and the students were dissatisfied. A complaint regarding this dissatisfaction was sent by the students to the Sessions of the Church, and a memorial on the subject was brought to the 1904 Synod in the name of William James Moffett. The memorial was later withdrawn, the students, no doubt, having confidence that Synod, having heard their grievance, would take suitable steps to remedy the situation. It was, however, 1909 before the Hall held its first session in the convenient and comfortable library at Grosvenor Road Church. There has been an unbroken connection with this Church ever since.

## VI. THE FINANCES OF THE HALL

The matter of financial support for the work of the Theological Hall seems to have provided a problem for the Committee of Superintendence during almost all of the one hundred years. The responsibility of training her students for the ministry has been clearly laid upon the Church, but the congregations of the Synod in their response to appeals have not always risen to the occasion. Each Convener in turn has shown the Church her duty, but in many instances, especially during the first fifty years, the Committee has been financially embarrassed. There were times when a special appeal succeeded, and the Committee



paid arrears of salary to the Professors covering three or four previous years. The amount paid to our Professors has never at any time reached £100 per annum. Admittedly, their services are on a part-time basis, but the fact is, and the Committee and the Synod have always been conscious of it, the remuneration has, during one hundred years, been grossly out of proportion to the amount and the quality of the services rendered.

On a number of occasions the Committee recommended that Synod should fix a fee to be paid by students each session. Synod last considered this point in 1905, but took no action. The Church has thus had full financial responsibility for the training of her students. For more than thirty years, however, students signed an agreement that if they abandoned the ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church they would pay the Committee of Superintendence £10 for each of the sessions they had attended the Hall. This agreement was recently abandoned.

When speaking of financial matters, a word might be said about Bursaries and Prizes. For the first thirty years or so prizes were offered by members of the Church and a bursary was regularly put forward for competition by the Eastern Presbytery. In 1886, Mrs. Mawhinney of Philadelphia founded the Mawhinney Bursary in memory of her father. The first holder of this Bursary was Andrew Cross Gregg. In 1896, Miss McAleese of Garvagh founded the Archibald Bursary in memory of her uncle, John Archibald. It is awarded to "the most deserving student in each year." The first winner was Robert John McIlmoyle. Mr. William Kerr of Kilraughts provided, by a gift, the John Kerr Bursary in 1914. It was first awarded to Wm. Lytle. Mr. Andrew Thompson of Loughbrickland founded, in 1922, the James G. Thompson Bursary in memory of his brother. Samuel W. Lynas first held this Bursary. And in 1940 a bequest of £500 from Mrs. Mary Jane Allen established the Stewart-Allen Bursary. This Bursary has been used each year to provide a number of prizes for the students.

## VII. THE TEACHING STAFF—PERSONALITIES AND CHANGES

For twenty-five years after the founding of the Hall, Professor Dick and Professor Houston carried on the work of the Hall with conspicuous success. The first change came as a result of Professor Dick's resignation in 1879. Rev. Josias A. Chancellor, Belfast, was appointed his successor in the Chair of Systematic Theology, after Rev. Robert Nevin, Londonderry, had declined the appointment. In 1882 Dr. Houston died. Synod agreed to make no appointment meantime. Professor Chancellor was asked to take

the classes in Church History and Pastoral Theology in addition to the work of his own Chair. Arrangements were made for students to take Hebrew classes at Assembly's College with Dr. J. G. Murphy. This arrangement lasted for five years. In 1887, Rev. James Dick, M.A., Kilraughts, was appointed Professor of Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, and Church History. He was a son of the late Dr. Dick, the first Professor of Systematic Theology. There were two Professors again for eight years until Dr. Chancellor's death in 1895. In 1896 Professor Dick was transferred to the Chair of Systematic Theology. Rev. John Lynd, D.D., of Dublin Road, Belfast, was nominated for the vacant Chair of Church History, Exegetical and Pastoral Theology. He declined the appointment and nominated Rev. James Dick Houston, B.A., of Ballyclabber and son of Dr. Houston, the first Professor of Exegetical and Pastoral Theology. Mr. Houston accepted the appointment, to take up duty in 1897. When Synod, in 1901, decided to have three Professors, Dr. Lynd accepted appointment to the Chair of Hebrew and Biblical Criticism. Professor Houston, at his death in 1910, was succeeded by Rev. Samuel Guiler Kennedy, LL.D. This Chair was vacant for three years after Dr. Kennedy's death in 1925. Synod, in 1928, filled the vacancy by the unanimous appointment of Rev. Thomas Barnwell McFarlane, B.A., of Newry, who has given twenty-six years of devoted service in this Chair.

Professor James Dick, after almost forty years' service to the Theological Hall, died in 1916; he was succeeded in the Chair of Systematic Theology by Rev. John McClelland Cromie, B.D., of Kilraughts. After his death in 1928, Rev. Wm. Russell, M.A., Trinity Street, Belfast, was appointed. Professor Russell, on his resignation of the Chair in 1941, was succeeded by Rev. John McIlmoyle, M.A., then minister of Faughan, and now of Dublin Road congregation.

Dr. Lynd, Professor of Hebrew and Biblical Criticism, requested Synod in 1922 to relieve him of his Chair on account of failing health. Synod regretfully granted his request, and proceeded to appoint Rev. John Ramsey, LL.B., of Ballymoney, as his successor. The Chair, later including New Testament Greek, was relinquished by Professor Ramsey in 1945. Synod divided the Chair into two lectureships, and appointed Rev. Alexander Gilmour, M.A., then minister of Dromara, and now of Newtownards, Lecturer in Old Testament Language and Literature, and Rev. James Campbell, B.A., minister of Larne congregation, Lecturer in New Testament Language and Literature.

The Church has been singularly blessed through the services rendered by the twelve Professors and two Lecturers. In a small Church, where the range for selection is inevitably small, the

standard of scholastic attainment has been remarkably high, and we have good cause to give thanks for these men of gifts and graces whom God has used for the propagation of Truth and the preparation of young men for the Gospel ministry.

## VIII. THE STUDENTS

The list of students enrolled at the Hall is full of interest. About 150 young men passed through the classes. Not all of these gave service in the Covenanting Church and not all were members of the Covenanting Church. Here and there through the years one finds the name of a student from the General Assembly. One or two students were from the Eastern Reformed Synod, and at least one from the Baptist Church. Occasionally there was a student from the American R.P. Church.

Of those who received training at the Hall there was a number, at certain times a comparatively large number, who entered the ministry of the Irish Presbyterian Church. Of five students, for instance, who enrolled in 1900, four subsequently went over to the Irish Presbyterian Church. A number of licentiates and ministers turned to the Eastern Reformed Synod, and there were others who abandoned theological pursuits for law and medicine. Sometimes we read of students enrolled in a private capacity, and the Committee quaintly report concerning one such case in 1868: "One young man, who had been a private student for four years, became a public student this year." In 1885 we read that 13 students were enrolled, among whom were 4 licentiates, but this appears to be an unusual procedure.

Our students from time to time attended the summer session at the Original Secession Theological Hall, Glasgow, and in certain circumstances the course at our own Hall was shortened from three years to two where students had certificates from the O.S. Hall. In recent years, too, a number of our students were given credit for the full course when one of the three years was spent at the Pittsburg Seminary of our American R.P. Church. In one instance a student's attendance for one session at Princeton Theological Seminary, U.S.A., was accepted by Synod.

On nine occasions during the century the Hall was without a student (1873, 1875, 1894, 1895, 1906, 1907, 1934, 1951, 1952). Eight times only one student enrolled. Over the other years, however, the average was about five per session. It is evident that there have been cycles in the offering of students for the ministry, for midway between the lean years were years of plenty, with 15 students in 1868, 13 in 1885, 10 in 1903-04, 7 in 1931, and 6 in 1940.

Through the years the cry is heard again and again, "We have five vacancies at present and only one student has been enrolled. 'Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will thrust forth labourers into His harvest.'"

## CONCLUSION

It is with profound thankfulness to Almighty God that we look back over these hundred years. The Lord has blessed the work of His servants and the high hopes entertained in 1854 have been abundantly fulfilled. It is interesting to record the closing words of a report in a contemporary magazine of the opening meeting of the Hall. "The commencement of the Hall was every way interesting and auspicious, and we trust that it will not only enjoy an interest in the prayers and cordial support of the Church, but that likewise, under Divine countenance and blessing, it may be the means of training many able and well-qualified labourers for the Redeemer's vineyard."

In this spirit and with this hope we commence the second hundred years.

## LIST OF CHAIRS IN THE THEOLOGICAL HALL

### *with the Professors*

#### SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (*with, later, CHRISTIAN ETHICS*)

1. James Dick, D.D.	...	...	1854—1879
2. Josias Alexander Chancellor, D.D.			1879—1895
3. James Dick, M.A., D.D.	...	...	1896—1917
4. John McClelland Cromie, B.D.	...		1917—1928
5. William Russell, M.A.	...	...	1928—1941
6. John McIlmoyle, M.A.	...	...	1941—

#### EXEGETICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY, CHURCH HISTORY AND HEBREW

1. Thomas Houston, D.D.	...	...	1854—1882
2. Josias Alexander Chancellor, D.D.		...	1882—1887
3. James Dick, M.A., D.D.	...	...	1887—1896

#### CHURCH HISTORY AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

1. James Dick Houston, B.A.	...	...	1896—1910
2. Samuel Guiler Kennedy, LL.D.	...	...	1910—1925
3. Thomas Barnwell McFarlane, B.A.			1928—



## HEBREW AND BIBLICAL CRITICISM

1. John Lynd, D.D.	1901—1922
2. John Ramsey, LL.B.	1922—1945

## OLD TESTAMENT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Alexander Gilmour, M.A.	1945—
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## NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

James Campbell, B.A.	...	1945—
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## COMMITTEE OF SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE THEOLOGICAL HALL

### CONVENERS OF COMMITTEE, 1854-1954

Rev. William McCarroll	1854—1856
Rev. Robert Wallace	1856—1864
Rev. Robert Nevin, D.D. ...	1864—1893
Rev. Samuel Rea McNeilly, B.A.	1893—1901
Rev. John McClelland Cromie, B.D. ...	1901—1917
Rev. John Ramsey, LL.B. ...	1917—1922
Rev. William McCullough, B.A.	1922—1950
Rev. James William Calderwood	1950—

## A LIST OF STUDENTS

The following is a list of students who attended the Theological Hall from 1854 to 1953. The date given is that of enrolment, and it should be remembered that quite a number of the students took part of their Theological course elsewhere. It has been impossible to discover the names of some of the guest students from other denominations, and there may be a few errors and omissions in the early years.

1854	Robert Allen, James Anderson, Thomas Conn Britton, Thomas Dick, William Hanna, Joseph Archibald Moody.
1855	James Brown, John Steele.
1856	Samuel Patton.
1857	Gawn Douglas.
1858	James Dick Houston.
1859	Robert McGowan Somerville.
1861	Robert Fulton.
1862	Torrens Boyd, Robert Dunlop, Joseph Hamilton, Thomas G. Houston, John W. McKeown, Charles Kirk Toland, Joseph Torrens.

- 1863 James Martin Carlisle, William Maybin.
- 1864 Joseph Cromie, James Kerr, Samuel Moffett, James Kennedy, James Renwick Moody, James Torrens, Nevin Woodside.
- 1865 James Dick, Robert A. McFarlane, William Scott.
- 1866 Thomas Cleeland, Joseph Frazer Hurst, Alexander McCarroll, James Martin, William McKnight.
- 1867 Isaac Thompson.
- 1868 William Dick, William Henry, John Lynd, Alexander McLeod Stavely Lyons, John McKee, George Gilmour Warwick.
- 1870 William John Maxwell, Matthew Hodge.
- 1871 Matthew Neill.
- 1872 John Dick.
- 1876 Robert John Morrell.
- 1877 — Burns, Alexander Patterson Gillespie, David Musgrave.
- 1878 William Curry, Samuel Ferguson.
- 1879 John McClelland Cromie, John McMeekin McIlwrath, Alexander Mogee.
- 1882 Joseph Gardner, Robert A. Kerr.
- 1883 William Chancellor, Samuel Rea McNeilly, James Parker, Joseph T. Potts, John Ramsey, William Russell, James Alexander Smyth Stewart, Ezekiel Teaz.
- 1884 Archibald Holmes.
- 1885 Robert H. Davidson, Andrew Cross Gregg, John Martin Littlejohn, William Littlejohn, John Carson Loughridge, James Park.
- 1886 Samuel Guiler Kennedy.
- 1890 Samuel Kennedy.
- 1891 Samuel Hanna Kennedy.
- 1892 Hugh Kennedy Mack, Thomas H. McCloy, William Manson Nevin.
- 1896 Joseph McEwen.
- 1897 Robert John McIlmoyle.
- 1898 Thomas A. McIlfatrick.
- 1899 James Edgar, Samuel Hanna, J. M. Johnston.
- 1900 Francis Moore, James Renwick Wright.
- 1901 Josias Alexander Chancellor.
- 1902 James Blair, James Buchanan, James Alexander Lyons, Wm. James Moffett, Wm. Warnock.
- 1903 Wilson Moreland Kennedy, Wm. McCullough, Thos. Barnwell McFarlane, Wm. Henry Pollock.
- 1904 Henry Hugh Matthews.

- 1908 John Knox Dickey, Alexander Gilmour.
- 1910 Robert Nevin Lyons, John McIlmoyle.
- 1913 David Calderwood, William Lytle, John McFall.
- 1916 Thomas Hanna.
- 1917 William Dodds.
- 1919 William P. McFerran.
- 1920 Alexander Gardner, Samuel Wallace Lynas.
- 1921 James Wm. Calderwood, Robert Biggart Lyons.
- 1924 John Watters.
- 1925 William Reid McEwen.
- 1926 Samuel Reid Archer.
- 1928 William George Moffett Martin.
- 1929 John Thomas Moffett Blair, James Campbell,  
Wm. James Gilmour, Joseph Henry McGladdery.
- 1930 Robert Barnett Cupples, Hugh Wright.
- 1931 Archibald Guthrie, Alexander Reid Wright,  
William Young.
- 1935 Alexander Barkley, James Graham Buchanan,  
William Russell Kennedy, Adam Loughridge.
- 1937 James Robert Moffett, James Renwick Wright.
- 1938 Thomas William Ball, Hugh Jamison Blair,  
Rea McNeilly Campbell, Matthew Young.
- 1940 Isaac Cole, Thomas Hutchins Semple.
- 1941 Charles Presho.
- 1942 Joseph Alexander Cresswell Blair, Ian R. K. Paisley.
- 1945 William Norman McCune.
- 1946 Thomas Donnelly, Robert Andrew Watson.
- 1947 David James Magee.
- 1948 Robert William Lytle.
- 1949 John Claude Macquigg.
- 1953 Robert Hanna, Samuel Lynas Reid.

# *The Importance and Responsibilities of Theological Studies, and the Encouragement to Prosecute them.*

**T**HEOLOGY has been defined by Dr. Charles Hodge as "the science of the facts of Divine revelation so far as those facts concern the nature of God, and our relation to Him, as His creatures, as sinners, and as the subjects of redemption." As some of these facts are to be found in the works of God, and nature of man, this leads to a distinction between natural and revealed theology. There are in the Word of God statements regarding the works of nature which declare the Divine perfections. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). But while the revelation of God in His works declares His power and Godhead, yet it is not sufficient to lead guilty souls to salvation. To find out how fallen man is to be saved, or who are the subjects of this salvation, we must open the Book of Divine revelation, and listen to the voice of the eternal God. A voice of condemnation is heard declaring, "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10); "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); "Death has passed upon all men for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12); and again, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). How can a man be born again? How can a man be just with God? How can God be just, and justify the ungodly? To these questions the rationalist can give no answer. When, through the declaration of the Divine law, every mouth is stopped, and the whole world becomes guilty before God, we hear the Eternal declaring redemption by Jesus Christ: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say at this time, His righteousness that He might



be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26).

In speaking of theological studies, then, we have to do only with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Theology, being based on the commandment, which is exceeding broad, necessarily includes many departments of knowledge. When we think of the wide range of truth, of its profundity, and the blindness of the natural man, we are brought face to face with the essential requirement for all theological study—the illumination of the Holy Spirit. He who is the Author of Scripture; He only is its interpreter. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

The Confession of Faith states, "The inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word." As is a fair landscape to a blind man's eye, so is the field of truth with all its incomparable glories to an unregenerate soul. Our state is that of death, and death cannot grasp life. God the Holy Spirit must cause breath to enter into the dead soul that it may live, and lay hold of Christ, who is our life. Thus the indispensable qualification for all theological study is a personal faith in Christ, His blood and merit, through the work of the Holy Spirit, and a dedication to Him as King and Lord.

## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDY

1. It is important that all should seek to know the mind of God as revealed in His Word, that they may be made wise unto salvation by faith which is in Christ Jesus. The study of theology is not confined to any particular class, no matter how learned, as though they were the sole interpreters of the truth. In 1 Cor. 1:26, 27, Paul writes, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence." Many a minister has found in his congregation some humble, experienced child of God at whose feet he could learn the things of the Spirit, as Apollos, the learned and eloquent preacher, had expounded to him the way of God more accurately by two tent-makers. The Holy Spirit works when, and in whomsoever, He pleases. The wind bloweth where it listeth. The basis of all theological study is the Word of God, which all are to read that they may come

to the knowledge of Christ. The Reformers realized the necessity of putting the Bible in the hands of the people that they themselves might search the Scriptures and learn the way of salvation.

2. The importance of this study is seen in view of the sublimity of the subject studied, and the excellence of the knowledge gained thereby. The fact that the truths of Scripture are incomprehensible to man, except by the teaching of the Spirit, manifests their glory. All the revelation of God in Scripture is summed up in Jesus Christ, who is the truth: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3); "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). We read of the unsearchable riches of His grace, His unsearchable judgments, His love that passeth knowledge. The Scriptures all point to Christ, in whom they are all fulfilled. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, these are the central truths of Divine revelation, so glorious that the angels desire to look into them. These were the truths that captivated the mind and heart of Paul. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8). He was filled with a consuming zeal for a still more intimate knowledge. "That I may know Him," he cries. If there was one who knew Christ surely it was Paul, and yet he stretches out his hands in longing, as though he were still a stranger, "That I may know Him." With the vision of Calvary in his eye, the things that seemed so fair before lost their lustre and were despised.

"Who that one moment has the least descried Him  
dimly and faintly hidden and afar,  
doth not despise all excellence besides Him,  
pleasures and powers that are not and that are?"

"I am sure," wrote S. Rutherford, "that the saints at their best are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ. He is so new, so fresh in excellency, every day, so new."

3. The importance of this study is seen also in the results which accompany and flow from it. There is knowledge that puffs up, but this clothes with humility. The Lord alone is exalted in that day. This is the saving knowledge. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This knowledge cleanses from sin, delivers from its power, causes the heart to burn with

love for Christ, fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and with zeal for the spread of the truth throughout the world. This knowledge strengthens the soul, comforts, sanctifies, inspires with hope, and changes into the likeness of Christ. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

4. If it is important that all should study the Word, it is specially so in those called to the ministry of the Word. Those who would be spiritual guides should themselves be savingly taught in the things of God. The utmost care is to be exercised in the reception of candidates for the ministry. They should be able to say with Robert Bruce, "I was first called by grace before I obeyed my calling to the ministry." Without this, the candidate, however great his talents, would be a curse instead of a blessing to the Church. How could one guide others in the way to heaven if he had never entered the way himself? How commend a Saviour to himself unknown? "O miserable life," says Baxter, "that a man should study and preach against himself, and spend his days in a course of self-condemning! A graceless, inexperienced minister is one of the most unhappy creatures on earth." Pollok, in his "Course of Time," describes the unfaithful minister at the judgment throne: "Among the accursed who sought a hiding place in vain from fierceness of Jehovah's rage and from the hot displeasure of the Lamb, most wretched, most contemptible, most vile stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt the fellest gnaw of the undying worm." These words are addressed chiefly to students for the ministry, not in the way of judgment or discouragement, but to lead them to give diligence to make their calling and election sure. When the Interpreter showed Christian the man in the iron cage of despair, it was not that he had suspicions that he was not a true pilgrim, but as he said, "Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee." So the thought of an unsaved minister should be a goad in the sides of student and minister to stir up to examination, watchfulness, and prayer.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The student of theology is responsible for the way in which he studies the things of God, whether wholeheartedly or carelessly. Diligence, earnestness, and zeal should mark those who aim at being evangelists and interpreters of the Word; diligence in searching the Scriptures with every help available, earnest prayer for the illumination of the Spirit, and zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of souls. In the first Psalm we may see

a picture of a good minister of Jesus Christ—his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night. Planted by the river that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, he brings forth the ripe fruit of the Gospel for those who wait on him, the seasonable word for the weary soul, and his words of grace and truth are unfading and long remembered. Works of theology are to be studied, but the first necessity is a knowledge of the Word itself. Turning the Scripture into prayer, verse by verse, and applying it to one's own heart, will give an insight into the mind of the Spirit that nothing else will. And this experimental heart-knowledge will be the best preparation for the pulpit. The nourishment got in this way will be nourishing also to the souls of the hearers.

The sermons of to-day are shorter than those of fifty or a hundred years ago. Briefer services, close, compact thought is the demand of the age, and for this careful, persevering study is necessary. Spurgeon says, "If you ask me how to shorten your sermons, I should say study them better, spend more time in the study that you may need less in the pulpit. We are generally longest when we have least to say." Broadcast talks have shewn us how much can be said on a subject in five minutes. Students for the ministry ought to make the most of the years of preparation, when time and opportunity are at their disposal. In later years, when settled in pastorates, their energies will be spread over many departments of congregational and Church activity. There are those who regret that the golden years of preparation were not spent to the best advantage.

Another mark of the present age is that the knowledge of Scripture is generally less than in past years. One cause is a decline in family religion; another is that homes are flooded with literature of an ephemeral type. Further, the wireless, and now television, take up the attention and time of multitudes. People are being spoon-fed, with a consequent loss of independence of thought and study. In view of this, a responsibility rests on the preacher to lead the people into a broader, deeper knowledge of Scripture, and of the doctrines of grace. Dr. R. J. George has said, "It is the want of deep, strong thought on the part of the ministry that has put in question the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The doctrines of the Church's faith were drawn from the Scriptures by thorough scholarship, and profound study, and they cannot be maintained without the use of the same weapons." Let us listen to what the Spirit says by the apostle: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:15, 16).



2. The responsibility involved in the interpretation of the Word. The study of theology is not an end in itself, but that the truth may be revealed to others. Paul, having spoken of "the things freely given to us of God," then says, "which things also we speak" (1 Cor. 2 : 12, 13). The minister stands before his people as an interpreter of the mind of God. This puts on him a responsibility that he may "shew himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2 : 15). The welfare of souls is in his hands. He is to lead the flock to the pasture fields of Scripture, and conduct them through all the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, ever following the example of Christ, who expounded to His disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. From every part of Scripture there is a way to Calvary. If the preacher makes not this his goal his labour is in vain. This is the master theme of the preacher—God's redemptive work in Christ. This is the key that unlocks the casket of Divine revelation; this is the answer to the cry of the burdened sinner, and to the children of God the finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock.

The cross of Christ is not to be preached as isolated from the resurrection, which is the key-stone of the arch. The main charge brought by the Jews against Paul was concerning "one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." The resurrection breaks forth behind the cross, clothing it with glory, revealing Him who suffered thereon to be the Son of God, with power mighty to save. This was the truth that gripped the apostles and fired them with a zeal that nought could quench; that the Christ whom they preached was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and was with them by His Spirit, making their words to be as sharp arrows in the heart of the King's enemies whereby they were made subject unto Him.

The covenanting minister is bound to emphasize this truth of Christ's Kingship, in view of his profession and covenant obligation. The Kingship of Christ was the corner-stone of the Second Reformation in Scotland. It was emblazoned on the banners of the Covenanters, written in their covenants, woven into their testimonies, graven on the tombstones of the martyrs, "murdered for owning Christ supreme, Head of His Church, and no more crime." S. Rutherford declares "the apple of Christ's eye to be His royal prerogatives as King and law-giver."

Through all the years the Covenanting Church has made this truth of Christ's Kingship the corner-stone of her testimony, maintaining that the covenants are still binding, that the Headship of Christ should be acknowledged by the nation, that His Word should be taken as the standard of legislation, and the guide in all matters relating to the government and worship of the Church.

This blood-bought testimony, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant," is to be courageously proclaimed and faithfully guarded. To this cause the covenanting minister is sworn, and he is to show what is involved in the supremacy of Christ, how it should shape and control every department of life, of the individual, society, Church, and nation.

In these days rulers and statesmen search in vain for peace, because they will not take God's way, subjection to the Prince of Peace. When many are bewildered, and others fear that the explosive forces discovered by scientists will be let loose for the destruction of the world, comfort is to be found in the truth, "The Lord reigneth." He sits above the flood as King for ever, working out His eternal purpose, and making all things tend, even the wrath of man, towards that one far-off divine event, when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

3. The minister's responsibility in the application of the truth. "The Directory for Public Worship" says: "He is not to rest in general doctrine, although never so much cleared and confirmed, but to bring it home to special use by application to his hearers." In this work he is to begin with seeking to bring conviction to sinners. This is God's command, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1). While some are driven to Christ by the proclamation of the terror of the Lord, others are constrained by the revelation of the love of Christ. In the Interpreter's house Christian saw the picture of a grave person hanging on the wall, and one of its features was, "he stood as if he pleaded with men." This is a note not sufficiently sounded in the pulpit. What a revelation of this we have in Paul! "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). Dr. Smellie says, "It was the crowning distinction of the preachers of the Covenant that there quivered through them the passion to redeem." This heartfelt longing for the salvation of the lost should possess every minister of the Gospel.

In dealing with individuals the minister will have opportunities of applying the truth perhaps even more successfully than in the pulpit. One such opportunity is in the case of young people before admission to membership. The one thing to be emphasized is their relation to Christ. The minister is to make clear the way of salvation, to pray with and for them, and warn them that unless they have taken Christ as their own Saviour and the Lord of their life, any profession made by them would be falsehood and hypocrisy. Negligence of the minister herein will bring

bitter regrets, and draw forth that sorrowful cry, "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation." A model of this faithful dealing is found in Paul's description of his work in Ephesus (Acts 20). Of this, R. Baxter says, "O brethren! write it on your study doors, set it in capital letters as your copy, that it may be ever before your eyes. Could we but learn two or three lines of it, what preachers we should be."

4. The minister's responsibility in exemplifying the truth in his own life. "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine" was Paul's advice to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16). When Jesus was before the high priest he asked Him of His disciples and of His doctrine. In His love Jesus was silent about His disciples as they had all forsaken Him. The world judges the doctrine by the disciple. Inconsistency in the minister will make the doctrine to be despised. While a double standard of sanctification is not to be set, one for the minister and one for the people, yet a clearer image of Christ is looked for in the minister.

Dr. Stalker tells a story which illustrates the power of a holy life. A lady was staying in a hotel in Alexandria. She spoke against all professing Christians that they were hypocrites, cheats. A friend said, "Did you never see a Christian?" "Yes," she said, "one; a man, a minister in that hotel; a tall, spare man from Scotland. He was a man of God. I watched him, and felt he was genuine. His very look did me good!" That man was R. M. McCheyne. What is the secret of such a life? We may find it in McCheyne's own words, "Oh, cry for personal holiness, constant nearness to God in the blood of the Lamb!"

### III. ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Encouragement in prosecuting the study of truth is found in the blessings obtained. Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious will desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby. Why did the two disciples constrain Jesus to come into their home? Was it not that their burning hearts impelled them to do so, that they might still listen to Him opening the Scriptures? Those who search and meditate on the Scriptures will get clearer views of the wickedness of the heart, new visions of Calvary, and each fresh revelation will draw out the soul's desire for greater knowledge of, and closer fellowship with, Christ. This intense longing for communion with God is a characteristic of the Psalms: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1, 2).

S. Rutherford has said, "Our best fare here is hunger." To such soul hunger the fulness of blessing is promised.

"For He the soul that longing is doth fully satisfy,  
With goodness He the hungry soul doth fill abundantly."

2. Another encouragement is that Christ has promised to send His Holy Spirit to be the Interpreter of His Word. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26); and again "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). He is the effectual teacher. Man's voice reaches to the ear; the Spirit speaks to the heart and causes it to receive the truth. He is the infallible teacher. No doctrine of Scripture is learnt aright except by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The sermons and writings of the greatest preachers and theologians are subject to error, but whatever is taught by the Holy Spirit is pure, unadulterated truth. He teaches continually, in His love bearing with the failures and frailties of the children of God. As Dr. F. B. Meyer says, "May it be ours to be patient and willing pupils in this heavenly school in which the Holy Spirit is Teacher, Jesus the Text-book, and character the essential condition of knowledge."

3. A further encouragement is found in the nature of the work of the Gospel ministry. What an honour to be the ambassador of the King of kings, to be a fellow-worker with God! Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler has said, "No monarch's throne and no presidential chair is so exalted as a pulpit in which a living preacher presents a living Christ to dying souls." Had the angels been sent on this work, how swiftly they would have obeyed! When the angel opened the prison doors for the apostles his work was done. "Go," he said, "and speak to the people." But he was not to join in their witness. Not to angels was given the precious seed to sow in the world. "The treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7).

4. The encouragement to be found in the joys of the Christian ministry. There is the joy of studying the Scriptures (Jer. 15:16; Ps. 19:10; 119:103). And then the joy of proclaiming the Gospel. Behold the joy with which the angel heralded the coming of Christ, which was followed by the song of the heavenly host. And yet the angels did not need redemption. Surely those who do need the Precious Blood will rejoice in telling out the wondrous story. A gloomy presentation of the good tidings of great joy is a contradiction. When the music of heaven is heard in the message, people will be drawn to hear.



And further, the joy of seeing sinners converted under the ministry of the Word, and believers built up unto salvation. Is this not the conclusion of the whole matter? Is this not the end of all study and all preaching? "For what," asks Paul, "is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

To find one jewel for Immanuel's crown is to taste one of the sweetest joys on earth. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Finally, all our study of the things of God, and whatever advances are made in the grace and knowledge of Christ, should beget within us a spirit of increasing humility, as we remember our sinfulness and blindness, and that we are as little children beginning to learn in the school of Christ.

*"For now we see through a glass, darkly:  
but then face to face"*

*—1 Cor. 13:12.*